

Bess and Marian Baxter walked leisurely up the steps of the boarding house, still discussing the relative values of dimity and organdy for summer waists. Suddenly the door flew open, and they were confronted by a disheveled little figure, with face flushed and tragic.

"Girls, I've lost it! The whole sixty dollars has completely disappeared! The maid must have stolen it -- or else -- no, I have been in the room all the afternoon, and we counted it again at lunch time. O, dear! What will you do to me?" and the girl sank down on the lowest step of the stairway, no longer able to keep back the tears.

"But, Catharine, it can't have been stolen, and it must not have been lost, because it is all our vacation fund, and if ever three young women needed a vacation, we do," cried Marian.

But alas for the three! The money certainly was lost, and no amount of hunting found it.

At nine o'clock that evening, they were sitting on their respective iron beds, trying not to feel too disappointed. Then spoke Bess, "There is but one thing to do. We can't stay here, for our month is up Saturday, and we have no more money from home till the fall term begins. We simply must work all vacation, -- for our board if we can't earn anything more. Our combined purses have about twenty dollars in them, that (thank the Lord) has not yet been spent for summer clothes. We must take that to buy a tent and a camp outfit, and we must go into the country and work in the orchards, camping under the cherry trees."

Ten o'clock Saturday morning saw three self-reliant young women step off the train at Niles. Approaching an amiable-looking, bald-headed man who was over-seeing the loading of a gravel car, Bess asked, "Can you direct us to an orchard where they are packing cherries?"

("Newspaper women, writing up the industry.") said the young man to himself, but aloud, "Certainly. Keep right up this road till you come to the first farm



farm past the vegetable garden. The Ellsworths are packing cherries there, and you can see all there is to be seen."

Bravely the triumvirate walked up to Ellsworth's, only to be told that no more packers were needed, but that Mr. Shinn was packing, and they might find work there.

Another mile of walking in the hot May sun brought them to the Shinns' farm, and here they addressed the woman who answered the call of the bell, with an air more deprecatory than assertive. Perhaps it was the heat that had wilted them; perhaps it was the shadow of their first repulse, and perhaps it was the slight sternness of the youngish woman with Roman features that opened the door. But a second look reassured them, for the severe face was suddenly wreathed in smiles, and a cordial voice said, "I have certainly met you before, -- in the gym. Aren't you the Miss Baxters?"

"We are," they answered in concert, and then followed an awful pause, till Bess screwed up her courage to the point of telling Miss Shinn what they had come for.

To timid Catharine's delight, Miss Shinn was sure that they could be put to work on the cherries. Her cordiality even went so far as having the man sent for their tent, the tent put up, and the three maidens invited in to lunch.

At noon, they were presented to the same man whom they had seen at the station, while his sister told him how she had engaged three first-class, college-bred cherry-packers for him.

Then a cold chill seemed to pervade the atmosphere, as Mr. Shinn answered, "Yes?" and then relapsed into silence.

After lunch, the three retired to their tent, while Mr. Shinn took his sister aside, and talked fluently to her for the space of fifteen minutes, his final sentence being, "Well, you've got to settle it as best you can. All I have to say is, that I simply cannot use them. I have a plenty of experienced packers now, and no amount of Greek or Latin will ever teach those girls how to pack as well as Leon Schwartz".



Meantime, from the tent issued sounds of hysterical laughter, and if one had looked in, she would have seen Catharine fairly doubled up, on their straw bed. "To think of all this worry and disappointment and humiliation, when the gold was under the lining of my work-basket all the time! That's what I get for not mending my things! No cherrypacking for us now! Won't Mr. Shinn be grateful?"

Just here came a voice from outside, saying, "May I come in, young ladies?" And with an expression of forced gaiety Miss Shinn entered, wondering how under the sun she should break it to them gently that they were not wanted. But before she could begin, Bess told her about the loss and finding of the gold, with many apologies for troubling her.

Mr. Shinn was so glad not to have to use them, that he willingly seconded his sister's invitation for them to stay all summer and camp in the cherry orchard.

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